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PROGRAM The MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour STATION WETA-TV
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DATE May 12, 1986 7:00 P.M. CITY Washington, D.C.

SUBJECT Publishing of Leaked Classified Information

JIM LEHRER: Next, the case of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency versus the U.S. press. The charge? Illegally reporting on American intelligence methods and operations. CIA head William Casey is the main accuser. The accused are the Washington Post, the New York Times, the Washington Times, and Newsweek and Time magazines. Casey told the Justice Department he wanted the five criminally prosecuted for publishing certain leaked information concerning the Libyan bombing raid.

The specific charge against the Post, for instance, centered on an April 15th front-page story which said, "The United States has the capability to intercept and decode Libya's sensitive diplomatic communications. Sources said the decoding was done by the National Security Agency, whose code-breaking capability traditionally has been one of the most closely guarded intelligence secrets."

Casey reportedly believes that violates a 1950 law called Section 798, designed to keep U.S. intelligence techniques secret.

The Post says that law has never been used against news organizations. And besides, the story in question was merely a follow-up to what President Reagan said in his nationally televised address right after the raid.

PRESIDENT REAGAN: The evidence is now conclusive that the terrorist bombing of La Belle discotheque was planned and executed under the direct orders of the Libyan regime. On March 25th, more than a week before the attack, orders were sent from Tripoli to the Libyan People's Bureau in East Berlin to conduct a terrorist attack against Americans to cause maximum and

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